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## NOTES AND COMMENTS.

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### A PRACTICAL USE OF VERSE.

THE impracticability of using telegraph lines for communication between Army Posts in a rugged country which was the seat of continual warfare between the United States troops and so cunning and daring a foe as hostile Indians, must be apparent to any layman; and taking a lesson from the enemy, who for ages had been skilful in long distance signalling through a line of stations, the government decided upon the experiment of sending messages by means of heliography, or the transmission of letters forming words by means of the flashes of light from mirrors.

Colonel Wm J. Volkmar, Assistant Adjutant-General and Chief Signal Officer of the Department of Arizona, was put in charge of this work and had occasion to congratulate himself upon the hearty support of the Chief Signal Officer of the Army, Brigadier General H. W. Greely, and the cheerful co-operation of the regimental officers.

On November 1, 1889, instructions were given to the officers commanding the various posts on the proposed line from Whipple Barracks, Ariz., to Fort Stanton, N. Mex., together with all branch stations, to prepare for the work. The result was that early in May, 1890, signals had been flashed and successfully read between all contiguous stations.

The total distance covered was 2,544 miles, and was taken from a table showing the stations occupied, their connections and minimum flash distances as estimated by horizontal projections measured by scale upon the map.

About 2,000 miles were operated connectedly during the two weeks' practice immediately following the completion of the lines.

During this practice all former records of communicating between two points by flash signal were broken.

On May 13 signals were successfully interchanged between Mts. Reno and Graham, Arizona, a distance of 125 miles. Lieutenant Wittenmeyer, Ninth Infantry, was in command of the former, and Lieutenant Dade, assisted by Lieutenant Peterson, both of Tenth Infantry, of the latter station. All were under the immediate direction of Captain Murray, Fourth Cavalry.

In referring to the remarkable and satisfactory results following the order of November 1, 1889, Colonel Volkmar says in his report of May 31, 1890: "To all the officers and operators praise is due for patient, untiring work in face of difficulties involving privations and hardship. The burning heat of the deserts, the cold and snow of lofty mountain tops, the painful daily climbing and descent of rugged peaks by stony trails taxing physical powers to the utmost, were all borne without complaint.

"Filled with zeal, each enthusiastic in performing his own part in what the Chief Signal Officer of the Army unreservedly styled 'the most comprehensive and best planned scheme of the kind ever devised,' the enterprise, skill, and daring of American Signal Officers, shown by this work, will command the admiration of soldiers everywhere."

General Greely, lately returned from his terrible experience in the Arctic region, manifested his deep interest in this enterprise by joining Colonel Volkmar at the seat of operations, Fort Bayard, N. M., and on May 10th a "through" test message was sent to Whipple Barracks, Ariz.; Fort Stanton, N. M.; and all intermediate and branch stations.

In preparing this message Volkmar was determined that the test should be a trying one—that words should not suggest their followers—and to this end concluded to send the message in verse.

Some lines occurred to him that he had read years before in the album of a lady visiting one of the official family of Gen. W. T. Sherman, and as the number of words was about the number desired, and a compliment to the Chief Signal Officer of the Army was happily implied, he called upon his memory and gave the message to the transmitter.

It consisted of 159 words, body of message, and 27 words address and signature, total 186 words. The report says:

"It was transmitted creditably, and at Whipple Barracks the copy received through seven repeating stations contained few, if any, more 'bulls' than would be found ordinarily in any message of such length and peculiar description transmitted by the public telegraph lines."

The verses are given here to show how carefully the message had to be transmitted and received in order to give such excellent results. They were written by Lieut. Thos. H. Stevens, of the United States Navy.

"The World's a mighty book upon whose pages  
Each man is sternly bid to place his name,  
And there, recorded through enduring ages,  
We mark the loved and honored ones of fame.  
Some touch with trembling hand the stylus fateful,  
Some write invisibly in tears the word,  
While those there be with spirits dark and hateful  
Write small their names among the coward herd.  
But, with a mighty purpose filled, the Chosen  
Spurn idle pleasures back to idle hands,  
And, striding swift through torrid zones or frozen,  
Stamp high their names on peaks of distant lands.  
And others come, godlike in conscious power,  
Who with far-reaching eye see bright reward,  
And eager rush to meet the slow-paced hour  
In which to carve their names with naked sword.  
And here, perchance, within this flexible cover  
Where men have writ in ink, then passed away,  
Time may recall as friend or reverent lover  
Great names illumed by Glory's fadeless ray."

ROWAN STEVENS.

## REGULATION OF THE LIQUOR BUSINESS.

THE sale of liquor at retail is a subject that has been probably the cause of more legislation in the various states of the Union than any other. In some of them it is entirely prohibited by law under severe penalties, in most of them it is permitted under restrictions. As yet, no effort apparently has been made looking to any uniformity of the restrictions imposed, each State providing its own laws regardless of those of the others.

That the sale of liquor is virtually a necessity is shown by the fact that, no matter how stringent the laws may be, it has been impossible totally to